

Septic systems

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Cost remains a snag for Snug Harbor plant

By John Chaffee
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Duxbury

DUXBURY — Selectmen last night endorsed a plan to build a septic waste system in Snug Harbor, but they disagreed about how the estimated \$529,000 cost should be split between taxpayers and property owners.

The plan, which is expected to be voted on at a special town meeting Oct. 30, calls for linking 11 business properties, the Duxbury Yacht Club and a public restroom site to a common wastewater disposal line, and pumping the effluent to a leaching field.

None of the properties meets state septic disposal requirements and some are polluting the harbor.

"We've got to do this. The question is, who's going to pay how much?" Selectmen Chairman Friend Weiler said.

The other two selectmen, Margaret Kearney and James Murphy, agreed that town meeting should be urged to approve the project but disagreed on how costs should be split.

The board of health has recommended that taxpayers pick up 25 percent of all engineering and construction costs, arguing that cleaning up the harbor and maintaining a healthy business community would benefit the public.

But only Kearney expressed support for the recommendation. Weiler and Selectman James Murphy balked at making taxpayers pay that much.

"We could set a dangerous precedent," Weiler said, noting that similar shared systems might be proposed to solve septic waste disposal problems in other parts of town.

Town Counsel Robert Troy said that under state law, the selectmen, in their capacity as sewer commissioners, will make the final determination on who pays what, not the town meeting.

But an indication of how selectmen intend to split project costs could influence the town meeting vote, Troy conceded.

Because the article calls for borrowing construction money, a two-thirds vote will be required.

In a related action, selectmen endorsed a town meeting article to build the public restrooms as part of the Snug Harbor project.

Director of Inspectional Service Kevin McDonald said building the restrooms at the same time will save about \$8,000 and provide a building to hide sewer project pipes and pumps.